

WASH Technical Report No. 87

CONDUCTING A TEAM PLANNING MEETING FOR STUDIES AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT TASKS

Facilitator's Guide

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by

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RELATED WASH REPORTS

A Facilitator Guide for Conducting a Team Planning Meeting. December 1985. Prepared by Wilma Gormley and Fred Rosensweig. Technical Report No. 32.

Guide for Conducting a Debriefing, Supplement to a Facilitator Guide for Conducting a Team Planning Meeting. July 1988. Prepared by Fred Rosensweig. Technical Report No. 32S.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document was developed as a supplement to WASH Technical Report No. 32, *Facilitator Guide for Conducting a Team Planning Meeting*. Technical Report No. 32 is primarily intended for short-term technical assistance teams traveling to A.I.D. missions overseas. WASH has realized, however, that a team planning meeting (TPM) for proactive tasks is very different from a TPM for a typical field activity and that it therefore requires a modified approach. Proactive tasks include applied studies, concept papers, training guidelines, and lessons learned documents. Hence this document.

WASH defines proactive tasks as those activities that are of general interest and not tied to a specific country. They often capture lessons learned, advance the state-of-the-art, or offer practical tools for operational issues.

INTRODUCTION

The Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project regularly uses the team planning meeting (TPM) approach to prepare its short-term teams for their assignments. To assist in the TPM process, in 1985 WASH published the *Facilitator Guide for Conducting a Team Planning Meeting*, WASH Technical Report No. 32. This guide has served as the basis for all TPMs that WASH has conducted during the last eight years.

The WASH TPM guide was originally written primarily with field assignments in mind. WASH has realized in the last few years, however, that a TPM for a proactive task is very different from a TPM for a typical field activity and that it therefore requires a modified approach. Hence this guide.

WASH defines *proactive tasks* as *those activities that are of general interest and not tied to a specific country*. They often capture lessons learned, advance the state-of-the-art, or offer practical tools for operational issues. Proactive tasks include the following:

- concept papers
- guidelines
- literature reviews
- training guides
- lessons-learned documents
- applied research

The focus of these activities is generally the product itself and not the fieldwork.

This guide is intended to serve as a tool for conducting a TPM for a proactive task. It encompasses much of WASH's experience in conducting TPMs for proactive tasks and incorporates much of WASH Technical Report No. 32 so that all the information needed to conduct a TPM for proactive tasks is available in a single document. The guide may therefore be used without Report No. 32, during TPMs for proactive tasks.

Comparing the Two TPM Approaches

During the last few years, WASH has defined what the differences are between the standard TPM, which is usually a two-day event held immediately prior to leaving the U.S. for a field activity, and a TPM for a proactive task. The following points summarize those differences.

- The standard TPM does not focus on the methodology of the assignment, which is much more prescribed than in a proactive task. In a typical field assignment, such as an evaluation, it is usually clear how a team should spend its time. The scope of work usually implies how the team will go about its work. This is less true for a proactive task.
- The end product in a proactive task is quite variable and therefore needs more definition at the start. In a field assignment, there are usually models available from similar assignments that the team can use as the basis for the report.
- In proactive tasks, teams need to spend more time on substantive aspects, sharing ideas, and developing a common framework to use in approaching the work. In a standard TPM, usually less time is devoted to discussing substance. The standard TPM instead is largely driven by the scope of work.
- Proactive tasks often involve the fusing of different disciplines to create an innovative and powerful new approach to solving a problem. Field assignments, on the other hand, often involve the application of ideas or findings developed during proactive tasks.
- Teams do not live and work together in a proactive task in the same way they do on an overseas field assignment. The bulk of the work is often done in the U.S. with individuals frequently not even located in the same place unless they come together periodically to coordinate their efforts.
- Since the focus of most proactive tasks is a written product, the emphasis should be on the audience for the product and not on clients. In a field assignment, the mission or its designate is viewed as a client. In a proactive task, WASH and the Office of Health are usually the requesting offices.
- Because proactive tasks are much more open-ended in that they can be interpreted in many ways, the involvement of WASH and Office of Health staff is critical in the planning stage to avoid the individual or team going off in the wrong direction.
- The written document in a proactive task should generally be of higher quality than for a field task because in a proactive task the written piece itself is usually the main outcome. In field assignments, the document produced usually represents only one outcome—a recording—of the work done in a project.
- Proactive tasks frequently can be accomplished with limited interaction between team members, as often individuals can work on their own in putting together this part of the end product. Consequently, the work plan for a proactive task is less complicated than for a field task, usually consisting of milestones and agreements for when the team will get together.
- Proactive tasks often involve interdisciplinary teams. The challenge is for the TPM to set a tone for the different disciplines to work together effectively. WASH has produced a guide to help interdisciplinary teams work together, which should be used as a complement to this guide in addressing issues that arise with interdisciplinary teams. That document goes beyond

the TPM, however, to include the selection of consultants and the field work which takes place after the TPM.

Overview of TPM Design for Proactive Tasks

Proactive tasks vary in the number of consultants who carry them out. Many are carried out by a single consultant. This guide is as applicable for a proactive task conducted by a single consultant as it is for a task carried out by two or more people.

Although two days is a standard length for a proactive TPM, task managers should not necessarily be limited to that amount of time. In the past several years, a number of more complicated, often ground-breaking activities have required more than two days. On occasion a TPM has required as much as five days. The task manager should base the length of the TPM on the requirements of the activity and not automatically assume that two days will be sufficient. TPMs for proactive tasks are much more variable than for field assignments. Task managers should not assume that the standard two-day design described in this guide is appropriate. The decision on length should be made on a case-by-case basis.

The standard schedule for a two-day proactive task follows. Each session is described in Section II of this document.

Proactive Task Team Planning Meeting Schedule

Day One

8:30-9:30	Session 1: Introduction to the Proactive TPM
9:30-10:15	Session 2: Background
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:00	Session 3: Understanding the Audience
11:00-12:00	Session 4: Scope of Work
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-5:00	Session 5: Developing a Conceptual Framework

Day Two

8:30-9:30	Session 6*: End Product
9:30-10:30	Session 7: Teamwork
10:30-12:00	Session 8: Strategy and Development of a Work Plan
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Session 8: (continued)
2:00-4:00	Session 9: Project Briefing
4:00-4:30	Session 10: Wrap-Up

*Note: Session 6 may take 90 minutes, depending on whether the group is prepared to develop a table of contents for its end product.

Outcomes of A Proactive TPM

A TPM for a proactive task has some different outcomes than a standard TPM. A list of the major outcomes that should result from a TPM for a proactive task follows:

- Statement of purpose;
- Clear definition of the intended audience for the document;
- Agreement on the conceptual framework for the activity;
- List of potential resources (documents, and people and organizations to contact);
- Description of the written product; including, if appropriate, a table of contents
- Agreement on the strategy for carrying out the assignment;
- Job description for the team leader; and
- Detailed work plan, including immediate next steps.

All of these outcomes should be written and distributed to all team members. Normally they will be written on a flipchart and then typed either during or immediately following the TPM. These outcomes are useful in monitoring progress since they represent agreements on key issues. The WASH task manager should provide guidance to the team on the extent to which TPM outcomes will be presented at the project briefing.

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROACTIVE TPM

1 hour

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to introduce the team members to what they will be doing for the next two days. The session is designed to allow the team members to get acquainted with one another, to set a participative and interactive tone, and to help them learn about WASH.

The session begins with a quick welcome, after which the team members introduce themselves, commenting briefly on their background and past experience as related to the project. Next, the team members discuss what they want to get out of the next two days. Following that, the facilitator presents the objectives and the schedule for the program. The session ends with the facilitator speaking briefly about WASH and its relationship to A.I.D.

Procedures

1. Introduction

10 minutes

Welcome the group to the WASH office. Briefly explain that the TPM is intended to help the team prepare for the assignment it will be carrying out. Emphasize the importance of this planning time, explaining why WASH considers it essential.

The following are some thoughts about why WASH considers this planning time essential. As facilitator, you may find these ideas helpful as you put together your own thoughts and explain, in your own words, why the team planning approach is being used.

- Often team members come from different disciplines and have varying experiences, expectations, and motivations.
- Team members sometimes hold different understandings of their client's or audience's expectations and use different problem-analysis and problem-solving frameworks.
- The scope of work for proactive tasks often lacks sufficient definition of the conceptual framework that will guide the task.

- Teams often fail to plan adequately and, as a result, do not use their time efficiently.
- Often team members have particular areas of interest and different preferences as to technical approach, which may also differ from those of WASH. This TPM will enable us to identify these interests and preferences at the beginning of our work together, and help us reach agreement on ways to proceed with a common framework for this task.

2. Team Member Introductions **3 to 5 minutes per person**

- Explain that one of the purposes of this introductory session is to get to know one another a bit better.
- In order to do this, ask each person to take five minutes to share with the group the following information (write this item on Flipchart 1 in advance):
 - share relevant parts of your background—what you’ve done that will be especially useful on this project.
- You should “model” this by going first. Then move from one team member to another. You probably should not take more than five minutes per person for this, and in fact, you may need much less time.

3. Team Member Expectations **15 minutes**

It is important that team members have time to reflect on and think about their own individual objectives for the TPM.

- Ask that they individually take a few minutes of quiet time to reflect on and write down what they want to get out of the TPM. Explain that they will share these personal expectations shortly.
- Give them five minutes or so to work individually.
- Next, go around the room asking all team members to share one or two of their expectations.
- Record them on the flipchart. If you get duplication, don’t write the expectations a second time; simply use a check mark in front of the first statement to show similar expectations.
- Continue eliciting expectations from the group until all have been covered.

4. TPM Objectives **5 minutes**

- Present the TPM objectives on *Flipchart 2*. (You should prepare the Flipchart in advance.) Handout 1-1, which repeats the objectives, may be distributed here.

- Post the objectives alongside the participants' expectations and point out any overlap.

5. TPM Schedule

5 minutes

- Present the schedule on Flipchart 3 and answer any questions. (This flipchart should be prepared in advance.) Pass out Handout 1-2, which repeats the schedule.
- Then, go back to the expectations, quickly pointing out where in the schedule each expectation will be met. Be frank about any expectations that can't be met in this meeting. (Being clear about expectations that can't be met is more helpful than making promises that you can't keep.)

If you wish, you may make adjustments to the schedule if doing so will help meet the team's expectations.

6. Introduction to the WASH Project

10 minutes

Take a few minutes to familiarize the team with WASH, its role in water and sanitation, and its relationship to A.I.D., especially the Office of Health.

Be sure to mention the following:

The WASH Project

- provides short-term consulting services
- employs an interdisciplinary approach
- works on rural and urban projects
- responds to requests from A.I.D. field and headquarters

7. Summary and Link to Next Session

10 minutes

Briefly recap this session and link it with Session 2: Background.

Materials

Flipchart 1: Procedure 2C Individual Task

Flipchart 2: Procedure 4CTPM Objectives

Flipchart 3: Procedure 5CTPM Schedule

Handout 1-1: Objectives of the Team Planning Meeting

Handout 1-2: Team Planning Meeting Schedule

Objectives of the Team Planning Meeting

- Review the background of the assignment.
- Identify the primary audience.
- Analyze and reach a common understanding of the scope of work, including the purpose to be served by the report or activity.
- Clarify the nature of the written product.
- Develop a conceptual framework for the activity.
- Develop a strategy for carrying out the assignment and a work plan.
- Define and agree upon the roles and responsibilities of team members and the team leader.

Team Planning Meeting Schedule

Day One	Day Two
8:30 Introduction to the Proactive TPM	8:30 End Product
9:30 Background	9:30 Teamwork
10:30 Understanding the Audience	10:30 Strategy and Development of a Work Plan
11:00 Scope of Work	
<hr/>	
12:00 Lunch	12:00 Lunch
<hr/>	
1:00 Developing a Conceptual Framework	12:45 Work Plan (cont'd)
5:00 End	2:00 Project Briefing
	4:00 Wrap-Up
	4:30 End
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Session 2

BACKGROUND

45 minutes

Overview and Purpose

In a proactive activity, as noted in Session 1, WASH and the Office of Health are usually the primary clients. Session 2 provides the background information on the WASH and Office of Health decision to do the assignment this TPM concerns. The purpose of this session is to develop a common understanding of the importance of the assignment, understand how it fits into the broader picture, and identify the key issues involved in carrying it out.

Individuals from WASH and Office of Health staff who were instrumental in developing the assignment and whose participation will be critical during the conceptualization and review stages should attend this session to brief the team members on 1) the importance of this assignment to the sector and to WASH and the Office of Health, 2) the individuals who are key to the completion of this assignment, and 3) guidance on the technical content.

During this session, key issues will be identified that the consultants must address in order to get their work done.

Procedures

1. **Placing the Assignment in a Broader Context** **15 minutes**

This presentation should be made by the person most knowledgeable about the assignment: the facilitator/activity manager, a WASH senior manager, or an Office of Health official.

- Begin by putting this activity in its larger context. The context includes the following:
 - ◆ importance to the water and sanitation sector;
 - ◆ importance to WASH;
 - ◆ importance to A.I.D.; and
 - ◆ how the activity relates to other WASH activities.

- State the purpose of the assignment.

2. Identifying Significant Events and Key Individuals

15 minutes

- Someone knowledgeable about the assignment should present any significant prior events that may affect the assignment. These events should be listed in advance on flipchart 1. Each significant event should be explained in enough detail to brief the team adequately.
- On the flipchart (Flipchart 2, to be prepared in advance), list key organizations and individuals who should be involved in completing the assignment, particularly in the conceptualization and review stages. Key individuals might include WASH personnel, Office of Health officials, and subject matter experts in other parts of A.I.D. and USAID missions or in other organizations. This discussion should also try to identify key written or published resources to refer to in completing the assignment.
- Encourage questions during this presentation/discussion, keeping the following pointers in mind.
 - ◆ Since this is the first time the team members have been involved in discussing the assignment in depth, they probably will have many questions. Your job is to guide these questions and ensuing discussions so the team focuses on the topic at hand, i.e., the history of the activity, and not move into a broader discussion of the conceptual framework or scope of work.
 - ◆ Some of the questions raised will be answered in subsequent sessions. You should determine which questions should be answered in this session and which ones are best dealt with later. One way to do this is to inform the group as to which session will best answer each question and then list the questions on the flipchart. You will end up with a running list of questions and issues that will need answering. (You might say: “We will be dealing with that issue in more depth during the session on the scope of work. Let’s not get into it now. However, let’s record it on our list of issues to make certain we don’t forget it.”)
 - ◆ The list of questions and issues to be resolved can be kept visible, added to, and referred to throughout the two days. Of course, it is up to you to see to it that these questions are indeed answered at some point during the two days.

3. Identifying the Major Issues Affecting the Assignment

10 minutes

After the presentation/discussion on the background of the assignment, ask if there are any other issues that should be added to the list. Add any the team comes up with.

Look at the list of issues that has been generated. Most of them will probably be dealt with in later sessions (e.g., work plan and scope of work issues). You may find a few issues that can be quickly discussed and crossed off the list now, however.

4. Recap and Linkage to Next Session

5 minutes

Recap this session and link it to Session 3: Understanding the Audience.

Materials

Flipchart 1: Procedure 2CSignificant Events

Flipchart 2: Procedure 2CKey Organizations and Individuals

Session 3

UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIENCE

30 minutes

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to help the team members arrive at a common understanding of who the primary audience is for the end product of this assignment. In addition, this session intends to help the team members identify issues that might be important to keep in mind in gearing the end product to the primary audience.

Procedures

1. Clarifying the Primary Audience 15 minutes

- Begin this session by linking it to the previous sessions.
- Ask the team members what they identify as the primary audience for the end product of this assignment. If WASH's perception is different, the task manager should say so and discuss it with the team. Agreement on the audience should be reached. Discuss any characteristics of the audience the team should be aware of. Note any secondary audiences, if any, that should be considered.
- If relevant, make the point that keeping in mind the primary audience of this assignment will not always be easy, and give some examples to support this statement. State that there is often a tendency to target the document to a wide audience and not to a specific group.

2. Identifying Issues 10 minutes

Ask participants the following question:

- What special issues are important to consider in developing the end product for the primary audience?

Record team member responses on the flipchart. In reviewing the issues, look for instances where similar points diverge from or conflict with one another. These points may need to be further clarified in subsequent sessions. State any clear WASH preferences in response to any specific issue.

3. Recapping and Closing the Session

5 minutes

Summarize the session, restate its purpose, and link it to Session 4: Scope of Work.

Session **4**

SCOPE OF WORK

1 hour

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to help the team members develop a common understanding of the scope of work, and clarify and agree on their individual roles and responsibilities in carrying out the required tasks.

The session begins with the participants rereading the scope of work and taking a minute to write down what they believe to be the overall purpose of the assignment. Team members then share and discuss their understanding of the task's overall purpose, and identify and agree as to what they believe to be their overall roles. They should also discuss any underlying issues. The team then explores each issue and grapples with how it should be addressed.

Procedures

1. Reviewing the Scope of Work 30 minutes

- Begin by explaining the purpose and summarizing the activities of this session.
- Next, ask the participants to do the following (list these instructions in advance on Flipchart 1):
 - ◆ Take a few minutes to reread or look over the scope of work.
 - ◆ On a piece of paper, write a one-sentence statement of the overall purpose of the assignment.
 - ◆ You have five minutes for this task.

Explain that when everyone has finished, the group will share and discuss everyone's individual understanding, looking for similarities or differences.

- After five minutes, ask each person to write his or her statement of purpose on the flipchart.

- ◆ After each person's statement is on the flipchart, ask the group members if they notice any differences in perception about the purpose of the assignment. Allow them to discuss this so they can explore any differences there might be. The team should end up agreeing on a single, well-written, and precise statement of purpose for the assignment. Arriving at a well-written, precise statement should help in getting the team members to view the task in the same way.

This final statement should be recorded on the flipchart for presentation at the assignment briefing on the next day.

2. Exploring Individual Roles **10 minutes**

Ask all team members to discuss how they see their roles, given their understanding of the scope of work. Help team members reach agreement on their overall roles.

3. Identifying Underlying Issues **15 minutes**

- Explain that nearly all assignments have underlying issues that either are not resolved or are difficult to resolve. Usually, underlying issues are not stated explicitly in the written scope of work, but are implicit. They may also be the result of some confusion or lack of clarity. Give an example from your own experience.
- Ask the group members to identify the underlying issues they think have an impact on the assignment. List them on the flipchart. Some of these issues may already be on the running list begun during Session 2.

Next, go down through the issues and discuss what should be done about each one. It may be that some of the issues can be resolved during the TPM; however, others may only be resolved during the activity.

Pay particular attention to issues that ought to be discussed in more detail in subsequent sessions, such as Session 8, on work plans. When an item like this comes up, suggest to the group that it table discussion on this issue for now and continue it during whatever session is appropriate. It then becomes your job as facilitator to remember this and make certain the discussion is resumed during the designated session!

4. Recapping and Closing the Session **5 minutes**

Summarize the session and link it to Session 5: Developing a Conceptual Framework.

Materials

Flipchart 1: Procedure 1C Individual Task

Session 5

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4 hours

Purpose and Overview

This purpose of this session is to provide technical direction to the activity. This session distinguishes a TPM for a proactive activity from a TPM for a field activity. Proactive activities by their nature require much more up-front conceptualization. They often result in the development of a new approach or a new way of putting together existing information and ideas.

Providing technical direction requires definition at three levels: task concept, conceptual framework, and elements.

Concept

Proactive tasks start with a concept, which is essentially a careful statement of the idea behind the activity. This generally occurs prior to the TPM.

Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a more complete explanation of the concept. This often takes the form of a theoretical model, a methodology, an outline, an organizing principle, or even a workshop design. The development of a conceptual framework will also include identification of the task's major elements.

Elements

This level involves fleshing out in more detail the elements identified in the conceptual framework.

WASH staff members usually have done some conceptual thinking about a proactive task. However, it is often not until the team planning meeting that the conceptual framework is fully developed. Often WASH staff members are clear as to what purpose they would like the activity to serve, but they have not yet done sufficient conceptual thinking to provide adequate direction to the team. The TPM must therefore allow substantial time for this thinking process.

This session should be structured to allow for maximal sharing of ideas, but it should not be overstructured. The intent is to make sure that the technical direction is well thought out, understood, and shared by all the team members and by WASH staff.

This session has three major steps. In the first step, the WASH task manager should share WASH's current thinking on the concept. The second step develops the conceptual framework. In some cases, it may not be possible to develop the conceptual framework during the TPM. In that case, the team should at least determine the content and questions that must be answered in order to develop the framework. The last step, which may not always be feasible during the TPM either, is to further define the various task elements.

WASH staff members who can help in defining the conceptual themes and parameters for the task should attend this session.

The timing for this session is approximate. TPMs for a proactive task may need to extend longer than two days, in some cases requiring as many as five days; this session's time is hardest to estimate since it will vary from task to task. When TPMs for proactive tasks exceed two days, it is this session that takes the additional time—often one or two days for particularly complex and innovative tasks.

Procedures

1. Introduction 5 minutes

State the purpose and summarize the activities of this session. Explain why this session is important. If anyone outside the team is present for this session, explain why it is important for such individuals to participate in this session.

2. Reviewing the Concept 10 minutes

Ask the WASH task manager to share WASH's current thinking on the activity. This should include a restatement of WASH's concept of the activity.

After the WASH task manager has explained WASH's current thinking, ask the team if it is clear about the concept.

3. Developing the Broad Conceptual Framework 90 minutes

- After the team is clear about the concept or idea behind the task, the WASH task manager should share any preliminary thinking on developing the conceptual framework. In most cases, WASH staff will probably have deferred more in-depth thinking on the conceptual framework until this meeting. If so, this should be stated clearly to the group.

- Ask the group for its reactions and facilitate a discussion that will air all of the team's views and opinions. This should serve to start a lively discussion. Be careful not to overstructure the discussion.

Below are three examples of conceptual frameworks that WASH has developed during team planning meetings for past proactive activities. These examples are not necessarily to be shared with the team. They are provided for the TPM facilitator and the WASH task manager.

- ◆ WASH has developed a framework for analyzing wastewater management options. This framework consists first of a model that shows how residuals are discharged into the environment and how they eventually have a range of effects on health, the economy, the ecological system, and the social fabric. The framework defines three types of interventions to mitigate or reduce these effects: technological options, policy tools, and institutional options. Once the overall framework was agreed upon, the rest of the TPM focused on further defining each of the three types of interventions. This conceptual framework became the organizing principle for a set of guidelines for identifying practical, effective wastewater projects.
- ◆ WASH has developed a methodology for involving the public in environmental management. The team analyzed the critical activities in water- and sanitation-related environmental programs and determined the varying levels of public participation needed at various points. The steps necessary for fostering public involvement were identified as identifying problems, assessing risks, setting priorities, developing management and implementation plans, and implementing the plans. The team also defined the key actors in the process, which included nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), technical assistance staff, and governments. After this process public involvement was developed, the team was able to flesh out each of the steps in the process, develop an outline for the written product, and develop a plan for producing the document.
- ◆ WASH has updated its latrine construction training guide. A training guide requires a different kind of framework than the previous two examples, which illustrate methodologies. The key objective in the TPM was for the team to translate into a revised training guide key concepts WASH had developed. In this case, after WASH staff explained the reason for revising the original training guide, the team defined the workshop goals and developed a rough two-week design. The definition of the workshop goals and the development of the training design provided a way for the team to decide what revisions needed to be made in the original WASH latrine training guide.

In each of these examples, significant time was devoted during the TPM to developing the conceptual framework. Without this commitment of time, the teams could not have proceeded.

- The group should end up agreeing on a conceptual framework— at least as a first draft. This framework will be part of the flipchart presentation for the briefing the next day.

**4. Identifying Content of and Questions
about the Framework Elements**

2 hours, 10 minutes

- Facilitate a large group discussion around each element of the framework to identify specific content elements or questions. The amount of time required will depend on the topic, the number of team members, and the extent of the needs assessment and information gathering that will be required to define the end product further.
- You may want to ask each team member to take a first try at fleshing out a particular component of the framework. Each team member should record on a flipchart his or her ideas, which the full group can then review.
- These flipcharts should be typed and given to each team member.

5. Recapping and Closing the Session and Day One

5 minutes

Summarize the session and restate its purpose.

If this is a two-day TPM, this session is likely to close the first day. It is a good idea to check in with the team about the first day. Ask the team members the following questions:

- How do you feel about the progress made today?
- Are there any leftover issues that we need to address tomorrow?
- Are there any housekeeping issues to raise?

Give a brief preview of what will happen tomorrow, thank the group members for their hard work, and close the day.

Session 6

END PRODUCT

1 hour to 1 hour, 30 minutes*

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this session is to review, clarify, and agree on the end product(s) of the assignment this TPM concerns. The end product could be a concept paper, a training manual, an applied study, an information gathering workshop, guidelines, or a combination of any of these. It may not be possible to develop an outline for the written product, but some time needs to be devoted to defining, to the extent possible, the final product.

The session should also provide the team members with a look at another WASH document that is similar in format and purpose, a document that will help them better understand the level of effort and quality WASH expects. The task manager may want to invite a staff member from the project's publications department to provide input about format, editing, or organization.

Procedures

- 1. Describing the End Product(s)** **40 minutes**
 - Begin this session by linking it to the discussion on the conceptual framework in Session 5. Next, state the purpose and summarize the activities in the session.
 - Remind the participants of Session 3, in which they defined the audience for the activity. Emphasize that the final product has to be appropriate to the audience in format, language, sophistication, and complexity.
 - If there are any similar reports that WASH has produced, share them with the team as a potential model. Having a concrete example can be very helpful for a team to clarify the kind of end product to aim for.

*Note: The length of this session will vary depending on whether the group develops a table of contents for its end product.

- Give the team members time to look through the sample document(s), perhaps about 5 to 10 minutes. Ask them to pay attention to the following:
 - ◆ organization
 - ◆ format
 - ◆ writing style
- Ask them if they have any observations about the sample documents.
- Tell the group that you want to come to agreement on the characteristics of the final product. Brainstorm a list of characteristics with the group and record them on the flipchart. After the group has brainstormed a list, discuss the items and come to consensus on a final list.

The characteristics should include at least the following:

- ◆ format
- ◆ length
- ◆ writing style
- ◆ use of graphics
- ◆ readability

This discussion should not address cosmetic issues that can be dealt with later. The purpose instead is to paint a picture of what the product will look like in order to guide the team in its work.

2. Development of Report Outline

15 to 45 minutes

- Ask the group if it is realistic to develop a table of contents for the final report at this stage of the activity. Acknowledge that it may be premature to do so. If that is the case, skip this step.
- If it is appropriate to develop a table of contents, assist the group in developing an outline using the following process.
- Brainstorm a list of the major topics that should be covered in the final report.
 - ◆ Discuss the list and group topics into main categories.
 - ◆ Sequence the topics in a logical order.
 - ◆ Agree on the overall organization of the report, including its major chapters or sections.

- ◆ Develop a list of major subheadings under each chapter or section (it may be useful and save time to divide up the chapters among the team and ask all team members to write a first draft of subheads under each chapter, which they would then share with the group for comments).
- The result of this discussion is an agreed-upon table of contents for the report. It is worth repeating that the task manager should not insist on developing an outline if the thinking on the task has not progressed far enough. In that case, the team should at least agree on when it will be ready to develop an outline.
- At this point, the editor may want to spend 15 minutes with the team discussing WASH writing requirements. It may be too early, however, to address writing concerns, in which case this input should be provided at a later date.

3. Recapping and Closing the Session

5 minutes

Summarize the session and restate its purpose. Connect this session to Session 7: Teamwork.

Materials

Sample copies of a WASH document

Session 7

TEAMWORK

1 hour

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to clarify the roles of the team members and to agree on procedures for working together. One of the major differences between TPMs for proactive and overseas assignments is that the proactive team is unlikely to be traveling together abroad. In most cases, after the TPM, the team members will return to their homes and communicate with each other via telephone, fax, or modem.

Proactive tasks can take several months to several years to complete. Team members schedule other assignments in the midst of their work for WASH. Maintaining continuity and momentum is therefore a particular challenge in proactive tasks.

The team leader plays a special role on a proactive task team in that he or she is responsible for coordinating the work of several individuals who may not be located in the same place. How this will be done should be discussed during the TPM.

Procedures

1. Introduction

5 minutes

- Emphasize that WASH places a great value on teamwork and on the ability of team members to work productively together. Mention that this does not always happen automatically and that WASH has learned that by paying attention to certain key issues during a TPM, teams often do better. Discuss some of the special issues in proactive tasks that are mentioned in the overview (e.g., task's length of time, working in different locations, communication, etc.).
- State that this session will cover two key areas: developing agreements for working together and the role of the team leader.

2. Agreements for Working Together **25 minutes**

- Explain that the group needs to reach agreement on how it will work together. Write on the flipchart the following points on which the team should agree:
 - ◆ decision-making
 - ◆ feedback on written products
 - ◆ future meetings (including when, about what, and how long)
 - ◆ methods of communication (e.g., fax, telephone, etc.)

Ask the group if there are any other points on which the team must reach agreement.

- After developing the list of agreements, the team should discuss and record the agreements one-by-one until reaching a consensus.
- The agreements should be typed and distributed to all team members.

3. Developing a Team Leader Job Description **25 minutes**

Explain that the next activity will help participants become more specific about the role and responsibilities their team leader should assume.

- Ask each team member, including the team leader, to jot down what he or she sees as the responsibilities of the team leader.
- Record these on the flipchart. There is no need to write down the same item more than once. The WASH task manager should add any items that are important to WASH that are absent from the list.
- After all the responsibilities have been recorded, ask the team leader if he or she is clear about them and if there are any he or she disagrees with or would like to modify. Negotiate the changes until the group reaches agreement.
- This list should be typed and distributed.

4. Summary and Link to the Next Session **5 minutes**

Recap the session and link it to Session 8: Strategy and Development of a Work Plan.

Session 8

STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PLAN

2 hours, 30 minutes

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is twofold:

- to agree on an appropriate strategy for the assignment, and
- to develop a work plan.

The assignment's strategy should identify the approaches the team will use in completing the assignment—how and with whom team members will carry out information gathering, how they will analyze that information, how they will integrate their written tasks, and how they will conduct their own internal review of work completed.

The work plan will identify the major tasks, when they should be carried out, and who will be responsible for them.

Procedures

1. Introduction **5 minutes**

State the purpose of this session and give a brief overview of the session.

2. Strategy for the Assignment **60 minutes**

Begin by briefly reviewing the conceptual framework developed the previous day.

Next, facilitate a discussion on the following questions (to the extent that they are relevant to the assignment):

- Who will team members need to target in carrying out the information gathering requirements of the assignment?

- How should the information gathering be carried out?
- How will the information collected be analyzed?
- How will sites be selected (if sites are to be visited)?
- What resources are needed?
- How will team members integrate their written tasks?
- How will the team conduct its own internal review of work completed?

Record on the flipchart major agreements resulting from this discussion.

3. Developing the Work Plan 60 minutes

At this point, the team leader takes over from the facilitator and with the team develops a detailed work plan.

- In developing the work plan, the group should use a basic framework that answers the questions what, when, and who. They may simply use three columns, one for each of the above points, and work through each phase of the assignment, or they may want to create a plan based on a time line (such as a Gantt chart). The work plan should include key milestones which can be used to monitor progress.
- The role of the facilitator and/or activity manager is to answer questions, clarify issues, and observe the process.
- In some cases, the team members might work without the activity manager present. In that case, they should write the plan on the flipchart or make copies if they use regular paper so they can discuss it with the activity manager.
- Remind the team that it will be presenting the work plan during the briefing.

4. Discussing the Work Plan 20 minutes

After the team completes the work plan, the activity manager should comment on it. If the activity manager ends up facilitating the discussion of the work plan, this step will not be necessary.

- The activity manager should ask questions, probe, make suggestions, encourage, and recommend changes—all of the managerial reactions appropriate for the activity manager to display at this point.
- Revisions to the work plan should be made as needed. During this discussion, the activity manager should direct attention to these items:

- ◆ Underlying issues—Does the work plan deal with the issues raised in Session 2 to the degree that it can at this stage?
- ◆ Team and WASH meetings on substance—Is there sufficient time scheduled for team and WASH meetings to define further the content of the product?
- ◆ Methodology for the assignment—Does the work plan follow and support the approaches that were discussed in the first part of this session?
- ◆ Writing schedule—Has the team developed a realistic writing schedule which includes several checkpoints to make sure everything is on track?
- ◆ Team member comfort level with tasks—Are the team members comfortable with the tasks for which they are responsible? Have team members identified backup assistance for one another when needed?
- ◆ Teamwork—Does the work plan reflect the elements of teamwork discussed in Session 7? Where might the team make improvements?
- ◆ Loose ends or unresolved issues—Are there loose ends that need addressing?

5. Summary and Link to the Next Session

5 minutes

Briefly recap the session and link it to Session 9: Project Briefing.

Session 9

PROJECT BRIEFING

2 hours

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to enable the team to present the outcome of the TPM to interested parties and to receive feedback and suggestions. The individuals who attend this session include staff from WASH, A.I.D., other A.I.D. projects, and, if appropriate, personnel from other organizations. This session allows time for the team to prepare for and conduct the briefing.

Procedures

1. Introduction **5 minutes**

- Begin this session by stating its purpose and summarizing its activities.
- Explain why WASH feels these briefings are important and tell who likely to attend and what their interest in the assignment is likely to be.

2. Preparing for the Briefing **55 minutes**

The team leader should work with the group to plan how the group will conduct the briefing. Participants should plan to cover these items during the briefing:

- purpose of the activity;
- conceptual framework;
- work plan;
- description of the end product; and
- questions/issues the team would like to discuss.

The team should divide up the presentation and decide in advance what each team member will present.

The role of the task manager during this preparation stage is to answer questions and to assist when necessary in the planning.

3. Conducting the Briefing 60 minutes

Team members should conduct the briefing as they have planned. The task manager should open the briefing, make the introductions, and turn it over to the team leader.

Session 10

WRAP-UP

30 minutes

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this session is to review how the briefing went, tie up any loose ends, and evaluate the team planning meeting. In order to give the TPM a sense of closure, it is important not to skip this session.

Procedures

1. Review of Briefing 10 minutes

Ask the group how it thought the briefing went. It is especially important to determine whether there are any changes the team should make in its planning as a result of what was said in the briefing. Ask the following specific questions:

- Does the overall direction of the task still seem to be on target?
- Were other interested parties comfortable with our conceptual framework?
- Have we identified the right audience?
- Was our description of the final product accepted?
- Does our work plan still make sense?

Make sure the team agrees on any changes that need to be made as result of this discussion.

2. Loose Ends 10 minutes

Ask the team if there are any loose ends that need to be addressed. If there is a running list of issues, these should be reviewed to make sure they have all been addressed. These loose ends are likely to encompass the following:

- exchanging telephone and fax numbers;
- making sure all team members have copies of the TPM products;
- locating and sending certain background documents to team members;
- resolving housekeeping details such as return travel, per diem reimbursement, etc.; and
- other concerns.

3. Evaluation

5 minutes

- Ask the team to evaluate the team planning meeting in the following way. Put the two questions below on the flipchart along with a scale of 1 to 5. Ask everyone to look over the team planning meeting objectives and the team's expectations (both of which should be on flipchart pages from the introductory session) and then decide where on the scale of 1 to 5 they would rate the team planning meeting. Give them a minute or so to do this.

1. Did the team planning meeting achieve its objectives?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all For the most part Completely

2. Did the team planning meeting meet your expectations?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all For the most part Completely

- Ask each team member what his or her rating is for the first question (objectives) and place an X on the scale for each team member according to how each individual scored the TPM objectives. Then discuss why each person gave that score. Next, ask the team members for their ratings for the second question, mark them on the flipchart, and discuss the reasons for the scores. Make sure to get everybody's reasons as well as feedback they may have on how to improve future team planning meetings.

4. Closure

5 minutes

Thank the team members for their participation during the TPM and close the session.

Materials

Flipchart to record team's evaluation of the team planning meeting

Appendix

SUGGESTED TPM DESCRIPTION FOR A PROACTIVE TASK, TO BE SENT TO TEAM MEMBERS AHEAD OF TIME

Date _____

TASK No. _____

Name of Consultant _____

Address _____

Each year WASH undertakes several proactive tasks to address issues of general interest to the water and sanitation sector. These tasks generally take place in the U.S., with field research often an element of the activity. WASH has always been very careful in the selection and management of teams to carry out these tasks. For the most part, we are pleased with the performance of our consultant teams and see them as a vital part of our extended organization.

We have learned, though, that proactive tasks are more successful when the team has an opportunity to come together to understand the activity and plan how to carry it out. We have found that when individual consultants work together to do this, it results in the team's increased productivity and effectiveness. The sum of the capacities of the involved individuals is greater than the parts.

To maximize the performance of WASH teams, we use a systematic approach for the preparation of our consultant teams called a team planning meeting (TPM). This goes beyond the orientation and information sharing that is often the basis for the preparation of teams. Typically, a WASH TPM uses two full days of time and takes place at the WASH Operations Center in Arlington, Virginia, before the team begins its work.

The purpose of the TPM is to provide the team with an opportunity to come together in a concentrated effort to define and plan for this assignment. Among the outcomes sought are the following:

- an opportunity to become acquainted and share backgrounds, experience, motivations, perceptions, and expectations of the assignment;

- a common understanding of the assignment and how it fits into broader program and project activities;
- identification of the audience for the final product;
- clear understanding of the scope of work;
- a common conceptual framework for approaching the task;
- a realistic work plan for carrying out the assignment;
- a well-defined concept of what the end product will be;
- understanding and agreement on the role of the team leader.

Proactive Task Team Planning Meeting Schedule

Day One

8:30-9:30	Session 1: Introduction to the Proactive TPM
9:30-10:15	Session 2: Background
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:00	Session 3: Understanding the Audience
11:00-12:00	Session 4: Scope of Work
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-5:00	Session 5: Developing a Conceptual Framework

Day Two

8:30-9:30	Session 6*: End Product
9:30-10:30	Session 7: Teamwork
10:30-12:00	Session 8: Strategy and Development of a Work Plan
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Session 8: (continued)
2:00-4:00	Session 9: Project Briefing
4:00-4:30	Session 10: Wrap-Up

*Note: This session may take longer, depending on whether the team is prepared to develop a table of contents for its end product.

We are confident you will find this team planning meeting both useful and enjoyable. We have been using it with WASH consultant teams since August 1984, and our consultants tell us it is a very worthwhile activity, one that ultimately makes their work more effective.

I look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

Task Manager